THE

# EVIDENCE;

OR,

## Religious and Moral Gazette.

*RELIGION AND MORALITY ARE THE BASIS OF HUMAN FELICITY.*

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No. IV.

## TO YOUNG PEOPLE, &c.

*roduction to the Evidences of the*

*ine authenticity of the Scriptures.*

IF the scriptures be a revelation from God, containing formation of everlasting moment, ost certainly they are handed to accompained with all that testiony necessary to confirm their vecity. An infinitely good being ould not make known his mind to s creatures by a special revelation thout establishing it by sufficient d ample testimony. The same oodness which would induce Deity reveal his mind to the world, ould lead him to make it known certain evidence, that he, and d not another, was the author of ch revelation. A contrary produre would be a violation of inite goodness. That the same inite goodness, which prompted od to make a revelation of his will, displayed with equal clearness, its confirmation by testimony, is pable of being made obviously to pear. That the minds of the youth ho read the *Evidence*, may be prered to feel the force of the arguents intended to be brought forard in a course of numbers, let be observed, that whatever has en spoken or written against the divine authenticity of the scripture, is rather specious than solid, and is really of no weight. Infidels have availed themselves of two methods to overthrow the scriptures and destroy their evidence. Those of the first class and of early date have thought to do much by making the bible appear doubtful and incredible on account of the mysteries it contains. Those of the second class, have had recourse to redicule and wit, and made very free remarks on detached sentences of scripture twisting them out of their due connection. The more thoughtful of the first class, in rejecting the bible because of its mysteries, have become avowed atheists and denied the being of a God. The ground they took made this necessary. They could not preserve consistency without. In looking into the works of nature they found them abounding in mystery, if therefore they denied the bible, on account of its containing things beyond their comprehension, they must for the same reason deny that God made the world. You will find almost every one who wrote a century ago to be an atheist as well as a deist. This is true of Hobbs Spinoza, Lord Kaimes and Hume; though the two last are of later date. These men, though of no inferior talents, cavil against those very points which we must suppose would constitute a part of a revelation from God. Is it to be conceived God

would give a revelation to the world bearing no analogy to his other works? If there was no similitude in what proceeds from the forming hand of God, how could they be ascribed to him as their author? If there was nothing mysterious in the scriptures, would there not be room, not only for suspicion, but for a fair conclusion, that they could not have originated from God, since in this case they would be wholly unlike every other communication he has been pleased to make of himself? Whatever comes from God must be an effect, not to be accounted for from another cause. If the bible was destitute of mystery, it would carry no evidence of its divine origin. To reject the scriptures on account of their containing mysteries is to oppose the very ground of their veracity. It is putting that to the discredit of the bible, without which it could have no claim to our faith. No sooner is this objection alledged against the bible, than we are necessitated to discard all proof of the being of a God from his works. Because in the visible objects around us there are mysteries. If mystery in one case proves a work not divine, it must in another. And thus the first class of Deists, by rejecting the bible, on account of its containing things beyond human comprehension have been obliged by parity of reasoning to go all lengths in infidelity. They have rejected the being of a God, by the same arguments which led them to reject revelation. Deists of the second class have been practical Atheists. For while they have professed to believe a God, they have in fact denied him. With all their boasted pretensions, their works have been disloyal, and fraught with acts of the most flagrant impiety and rebellion against the governor of the universe.

It has been a darling object with infidels of every age and class to lay waste and destroy the system of faith and practice, revealed in the bible. In this all their views have concentrated. And why should they be so zealous to accomplish such a purpose, unless it be that the bible condemns them and apprizes them, that their course is ruinous? If they can put down its authority, they can rise above its threatenings. This done, they can pass down the current of high-handed and secret iniquity without misgivings. A wicked heart is the basis of infidel principles. They grow from it as noxious weeds from impure seed. And what have infidels done, but to destroy system and open the floodgates of vice? They have made desperate inroads without a substitute to repair the ruins they have left. Infidel philosophy by destroying sensibility makes men stoics. It eradicates every tender feeling for the distressed. It wipes away none of the tears of sorrow, has no consolation for the bereaved, no relief for the troubled mind, no hope for the dying. Beyond the space of a few hours, it holds out nothing better than awful uncertainty, it may be annihilation, or an inconceivable something, unknown and towards which virtue and vice are perfectly indifferent.

Might we not have supposed, that infidels who have spent their whole life in opposing the religion of the bible, who have made such desperate efforts to banish it from the world, would have substituted something in its place? But they have given us nothing. And how unequal the barter, to sacrifice life and immortality, and the bright prospect of an eternal reign with the redeemer, for a thing of naught, which not only robs us of every in-

ducement to virtue, but licences vice to all the extent of inclination? Infidelity has no better reward than this. And what pitiful, miserable proffer to an immortal mind? What infidels have done, laying the whole together, shows us in the most striking light our need of such a revelation as that before us in the bible. At their best estate they have not a foot of ground to stand on. Infidelity is a self-created castle. It has no room for reflection and seriousness. It was never made for a dying hour. Never did so much as one man in the immediate prospect of death abandon the religion of Jesus and become an advocate for infidel principles. This is a sight never yet seen. The contrary has been witnessed. Some of the most daring infidels have trembled, on being brought to the verge of eternity---have witnessed for God and retracted their former ideas. The Earl of Rochester was a striking instance. Who than he had been a more avowed enemy to the Christian name, a more open slanderer, or had treated the cross of Christ with greater insolence and ridicule? But when he come to see himself on the confines of the invisible state, he was ready to take back his hard speeches, and with apparent sincerity, and penitence, to commit his eternal interests to that saviour, who had been till this time the object of his odium.

You my young friends may weigh infidelity in any scale, you may con over its parts and examine their nature and tendency, and you will find them all to center in one point, viz. the desolation of virtue and the tolleration of sin. It is bottomed on the desire of sinning and sinning without danger. While you follow the writer of these numbers, in what may ensue, let not your minds waver nor verge towards infidel principles. Deism is the very thing I have represented. I refer you to the writings, to the conversation and lives of infidels. The above has been rather preparatory. The next number will bring you to a nearer view of that testimony which proves the scriptutes to be of divine original.

E.

## "O Man greatly beloved."

Such was the salutation of the Angel to Daniel, after he had spent three whole weeks in penitence, fasting and prayer. What peculiar excellency was there in Daniel to procure such benediction? He was one of those children who were carried captive into Babylon with Jehoiakim the king of Judah: he could not have been many years of age at the time of his captivity, for he lived more than seventy years afterwards. After he arrived in Babylon, he was chosen amongst others to stand before the king; and a portion of the provision used at court appointed him: but Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat nor with the wine which he drank; he chose rather to deny himself lawful food, than risque the danger of being obliged to eat that which was unlawful. His form was beautiful, he excelled in wisdom, and an excellent spirit was found in him. Constant in prayer which he would on no account omit altho' death stood at the door, so feeling that when called upon to interpret Nebuchadnezar's dream his thoughts troubled him a whole hour before he could declare what God was about to bring on the king. He was a second time taken prisoner, carried from Babylon to Media. Here he was again placed high in office, yet so upright that his deadly

enemies could find no fault in him. He was often mourning over the afflictions and sins of his people. Indeed the holy spirit has recorded no circumstance of his life which does not appear fully to deserve the appellation of greatly beloved. And when the Almighty threatens to bring his sore judgments on the people for their great wickedness, the sword, and the pestilence; Daniel is mentioned as one of those worthies who should save his soul alive.

WHAT an example his holy life presents to us? Who would not forgo any pleasure the world has to bestow for such a glorious distinction? to be greatly beloved by the God of Heaven, by the blessed redeemer, and all the holy Angels which surround the throne. Let all them who sigh for such distinction forsake not only those practices which are allowed to be sins by all classes; but those also which under the name of innocent amusements, may have a tendency to lead the soul away from God the supreme good, and lay them open to the temptations of that cruel enemy who goeth about seeking whom he may devour. His life also is a striking type of Jesus the son of God. Did Daniel excel in wisdom? So did Jesus—never man spoke like this man. Could his enemies find no fault at all in him, altho' they sought it with such selfish malice, that they were obliged to make a new law to destroy him? so the Jews could find no fault at all in the Saviour of the world, altho' they sought it with all the aid satan could give them. They brought false witnesses against him, yet found nothing whereof to accuse him. Was Daniel condemned to die, being innocent?—so was Jesus. Was Daniel delivered to the fury of the Lion—and did the Almighty power of God shut the lion's mouth so they could not hurt him? so Jesus was delivered to the power of death; yet never more certainly conquered that roaring lion than when he was delivered to his power. Did Daniel come forth from the den of lions alive and well, and did it prove the power of God, and cause a decree that all men should worship the God of Daniel? so Jesus arose from the grave, and by his resurrection proved himself to be the son of God with power, and confirmed the truth of his Godhead, by which he requires the worship of his people in all places of his dominion. But no type can be exactly like its antitype. Daniel confesseth his sin.

DANIEL'S history affords instruction to those pious but doubting souls who are looking for perfection in themselves and dare not approach the table of the Lord, because they find sin still dwells in their mortal body. Daniel was not free from sin. Yet he was greatly beloved. Examine yourselves. Do you steadily purpose to serve God, though earth with all its pleasures court your attention? Do you purpose in your heart to partake of nothing which would have a tendency to defile you, although the world esteems it lawful? Do you imitate the conduct of Daniel, his deep humility, his persevering probity, his daily prayer, and after all present yourselves to God only in his righteousness? If so then come forward and strengthen your graces with the symbols of his precious, his dying love, who is already the sovereign of your affection and who commands you to do it in remembrance of him. And you my dear children, over whom my heart yearns with parental solicitude; when I see you passing onward to eternity, without God and, without hope, fain would I bring you back to your

true interest, but alas! should my heart weep blood for you, I can only point out to you your danger, and your duty. Do you wish to be loved as was Daniel; then seek the God of Daniel now in your youth, while he may be found. To his mercy I commend you; and may he draw you to the Son that you may lay hold on eternal life,

B.

*Remarks on Romans* 9. 3.

In Chap. 8th, the Apostle speaks of the certainty of the saint's perseverance and their eternal salvation; by the consideration of which, he would comfort his christian brethren under manifold sufferings. And lest any should infer from the doctrine of the Saints perseverance, that all who were God's visible people shall certainly be saved; he informs that he had great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart, for his brethern, his kinsmen according to the flesh, who were Israelites. The clause in verse 3d. "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ," is, in some Great testaments, included in a parenthesis, and thus appears to be explanatory of the Apostle's great heaviness and continual sorrow in heart, for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh.

In the Greek, the verb which is translated, *I could wish*, is formed in the first person singular of the imperfect tense, of the indicative mood, passive form; but it is a deponent verb; and this clause; "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ," might in strictness of grammer and according to its most natural arrangement in the Greek, be translated: "For I myself an anathema, did glory to be without Christ; or, "*For I myself* an anathama did wish to be without Christ." If this passage is thus translated, as it may be according to the original, it will be explanatory of the Apostle's declaring that he had great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart for his brethern, his kinsmen according to the flesh. St. Paul was fully sensible that the state of all men by nature is the same; and remembering in what a deplorable condition, he had been, while unreconciled to God through Jesus Christ, that he was then momentarily exposed to everlasting burnings, and that while in this deplorable condition, an anathama did wish to have nothing to do with Christ, as one who had come to seek and to save that which was lost; and having the most flagrant proof that there were many then among the Jews acting the same part which he had formerly been acting, while he himself was unregenerated, he mentions his own former feelings of heart and real condition, to show, why he, particularly, had such great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart, for his brethern, his kinsmen according to the flesh; who were Israelites. He appears to have been filled with the most tender concern and anxiety for the Spiritual welfare of those, who were, among the Jews, acting the part, which he had been acting, while an enemy to Christ, and wishing to have nothing to do with him as the saviour of sinners.

O READER, did Paul view the condition of those Jews, who were unreconciled to God, thro' Jesus Christ awfully deplorable! And dost thou realize how awfully dangerous it is to continue at heart an enemy to Christ? Think not that thou art

personally interested in the Lord Jesus, unless thou art in great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart for thy fellow-sinners around thee, and most anxiously engaged for their eternal salvation.

ART thou a christian, then remember what a deplorable condition thine was, when sovereign grace, first brought thy feet up out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and established thy goings, and put a new song into thy mouth; and spare no pains to show sinners their need of an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, by faith in his name, and point them to him as the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

ZETA.

BENEFIT OF RELIGION.

THE high importance of the christian religion, in consoling mankind under the severest afflictions of human life, must impress itself deeply on the minds of the thoughtful and contemplative. Often it is the sole prop when men are pressed down by overbearing woe, and the only refuge from black despair. But this leaves the greater part untold. It not only deprives affliction of its sting, but pours into the breast of the sufferer, the highest joy of which he is susceptible. The vale that was gloomed with clouds and dead to vegetation, under the desolating energy of the hail and tempest, is cheered, animated and enlivened by the warm beams of the sun.

How truly detestable is the witless infidel, who under the guidance of ignorance, or vanity, or vice would rob the wretched of his only consolation, and extinguish in his breast the beams of hope! What does he supply in its room? The comfortless belief, that man lives like the beast, the outcast of providence and like the beast, dies without the expectation of immortality! How low and groveling must be the taste and pursuits of that wretched being, who can think and act under the influence of this principle.

CONSIDERATIONS of this nature offered themselves to my mind with peculiar energy, during a conversation which recently I had with an aged man, who for nine years past had been afflicted with the greatest misfortunes. The venerable old gentleman informed me, that within twelve months he had been deprived of his wife, a mother, a grandson and a great grand son, and that his grand daughter was then rapidly declining with a consumption. His conversation was cheerful, and unaffected, and the above information was given in consequence of inquiries, which curiosity prompted me to make.

I remarked to him, that he had been visited with peculiar calamity, greatly aggravated by the death of

his wife, and that the want of a companion must render him quite unhappy. To this the old gentleman replied with an animated countenance, and as nearly as my memory enables me to recollect, in the following words. "You are mistaken I am not unhappy. I do not deny that I have keenly felt the afflictions with which a merciful being has thought me fit, for my profit to chasten me, but these wounds were of no long duration. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without the appointment of our heavenly father, and I submit without murmuring to his chastisements. Wherefore doth a living man complain for the punishment of his sins? Be still and know that I am God. Clouds and darkness are round about him, but righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. Life at best is but a vapour, and mine is near its close. I have been preserved from numerous evils which surrounded me, and thanks be to God, I am not ship-wrecked."

The old man ceased speaking, and the animated glow of hope beamed on his countenance. To use an expressive phrase, "I saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." The real dignity of man, his illustrious descent, and glorious destination, never appeared to me more impressive

How different from this would have been the conduct of the infidel? Instead of the language of hope and pious exultation, the ear would have been fatigued with accents of complaint. No future prospect would solace his misfortunes; no rays of light would gild the closing scene of life. Disgusted with the world, cut off from present pleasure, and looking forward without expectation of happiness, he would view the grave as the final termination of his being. How dreadful the prospect, except to the *hardened profligate* who would not extend his view beyond this period, nor admit that there is a state of being, in the joys of which, he is forbid to hope.

VERUS.

## EXTRACT OF A LETTER.

"In every period of the christian church, the first step towards licentiousness and irreligion has been the denial of some one of those peculiar doctrines of revelation, which cannot be discovered by the light of nature. As soon as these great and important barriers to human pride and wickedness are removed, every species of scepticism is introduced, and mankind are left to believe whatever they please, and are no longer confined to that faith

which our blessed saviour has made essential to salvation.

" In pursuance of this plan, that illustrious and eminently peculiar doctrine of christianity, *the divinity of our blessed Lord*, has been the first attacked. As soon as this corner stone of our holy religion is removed, the whole beautiful fabric falls at once. So intimately are all the doctrines of Christ connected, that they must stand or fall together. And what God hath joined, who shall dare to put assunder ?"

## *On VIRTUE.*

VIRTUE, if any thing on this side the grave is worthy our regard, should certainly claim our first attention. To moulder away an existence of three score years and ten, without making *one* feeble exertion to render ourselves beloved and respected by those whose good opinion is worth the cultivation, renders a man distinguished from a brute only by his form. An immortal soul, while encompassed in a mortal body, should have other employment beside hoarding up *property*, which by Nature's eternal law it must shortly forsake. If we are allied to Heaven by our birth—if our souls ars immortal, let our affections evince the celestial genealogy.

Y.

THE British and Foreign Bible Society has commenced a correspondence with the Arch-Bishop of Moscow, with a view to the printing the scriptures in the Russian language. At present, it is said, there is but one bible, to 16,000 Russians. The society has also voted a considerable sum of money to some well disposed persons in Denmark, who are printing 2000 Icelandic New Tastaments, to enable them to add 3000 more to the number, and assist them hereafter in printing the whole Bible.

☞ As No. 13 completed the the first quarter, the readers of the Evidence will be pleased to recognize the conditions and make remittance as soon as possible. Those who receive the Evidence by mail, will remit to Dr. Thomas O'H. Croswell, Post-Master, Catskill, who is appointed agent to receive such sums as may be forwarded.

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